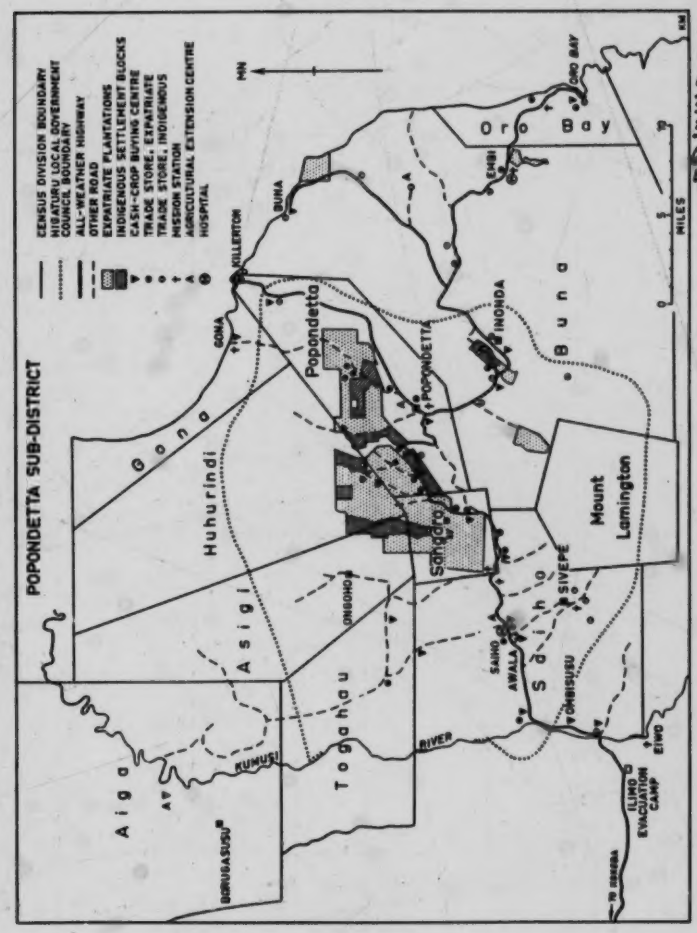
9: Kearney P-5 (1963) 1966 OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23



102
131
133
366
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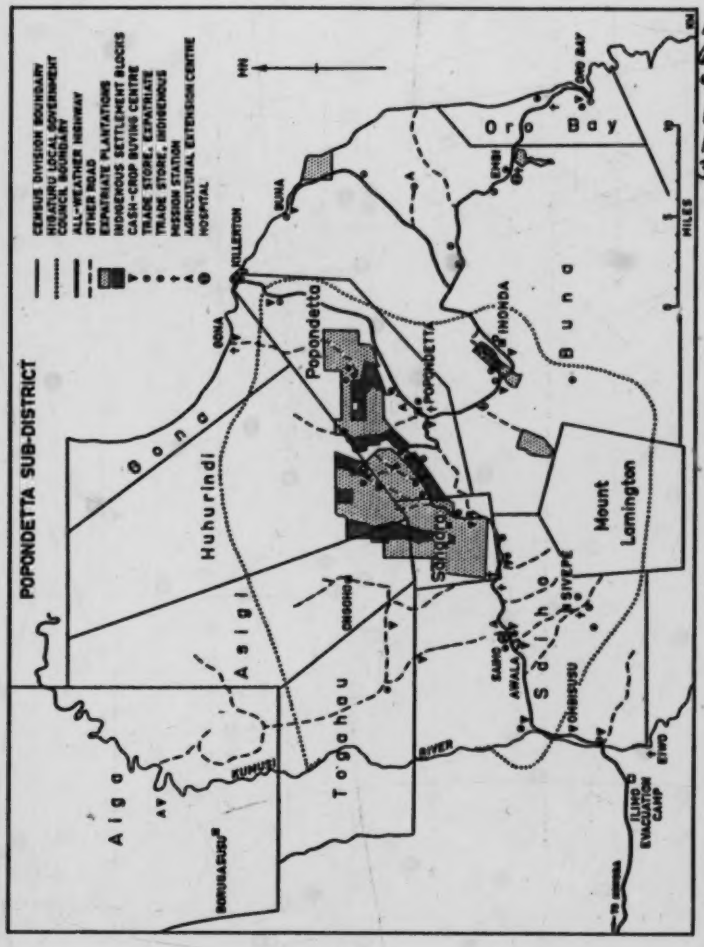
631
491

[p.44]

11: Dakeyne K-5 (1962-1964) 1966 QJ23 Orokaiva QJ23
Yega



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[631]

Community leadership

Three of the four entrepreneurs are eldest sons and two of them are heads of sub-clans. The third expects to be when the present holder, his father's younger brother, dies. All four have or had elective status in the community, in religious, political or economic institutions. Three of the four are or have been church councillors,[1] two have been local government councillors,[2] and three directors of the Orokaiva Coffee Growers' Co-operative. The extensive time these men give to community leadership (an average of 7.6 hours weekly) contrasts strongly with that of Inonda and Sivepe villagers (0.5 hours).

While the others seem to have been willing to accept leadership roles among villagers, D has declined nomination as a councillor and several other roles and has less contact with village society. This is perhaps due to his being a stranger to this area.

A, B and C claim to have gone to considerable trouble to encourage the people of surrounding villages to engage in cash-cropping. In B's case at least there is clear evidence that this is so. Apart from active encouragement, their enterprises could be expected to have had significant demonstration effects. The fact that villages adjacent to those of the two longest established entrepreneurs, A and B, have a higher number of trees per man than other villages in the census division supports this suggestion.

Demonstration effects, however, appear to be less in the entrepreneur's own village, where he is in all cases envied and resented by many. My impression from living among the Orokaiva is that the prestige of the entrepreneurs increases as one gets further away in a radius of five miles or so (perhaps ten in the case of B) and decreases again thereafter. A and B in particular often accommodate strangers on long journeys on foot, and B has for many years had a special house which is available to any foot traveller. Distant villagers, returning labourers, children going to and from boarding school and others from up to fifty miles away stay overnight at B's house. No charge is made, no gift expected or usually given. In fact B, who is widely acclaimed for his hospitality to strangers, usually supplies them with vegetable foods.

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[1] Elected annually, usually one per village. A retired in favour of his eldest son and B retired when the refugees from the Mount Lamington villages (who had elected him) left their temporary settlement near B's coffee plot. He was asked by the village to be their church councillor but declined as he lived outside the village and the role of councillor ideally requires constant attendance in the village.

[2] Elected triennially. Each represents several villages. A retired owing to age. B was defeated.

Chapter 2

The Ombi-Tara conversion scheme

657 423 631 Two Orokaiva villages, Ombi (also known as Ombisusu) and Tara combined in the Ombi-Tara conversion scheme which was among the first to be promoted in the Northern District under the Land (Tenure Conversion) Ordinance 1963.[1]

[621] [614] Ombi and Tara contain two clans, Musu and Kuei. The Musu clan is concentrated in Ombi village and the Kuei in Tara. However, Ombi has three Kuei households and Tara has one Musu.

At the time of our stay 178 people were living at Ombi-Tara. There were twenty households in Ombi, nine in Tara, and six on the converted blocks, close to the access road running between Ombi and Tara (see the conversion plan on p.12).[A]

Thirty-five of the forty-one resident adult males had applied or wished to apply for converted blocks; the remaining six were old men who said that they were too old to apply for blocks. Four of them had sons who had applied.

Cash cropping experience of the Ombi-Tara people

249 654 The Ombi-Tara people's experience with cash crops began when they planted some bush rubber seedlings after the first world war. They were encouraged by the Administration under Native Regulation No.121 (Native Regulation Ordinance 1908-30).[2] Although the trees were neglected for some years they continued to grow, demonstrating the suitability of the area for rubber (Mann 1954:35). After some time villagers began tapping the trees and selling the latex to a local planter.

383 654 In mid 1964 the Department of Agriculture suggested that the Ombi-Tara people should process their own latex with hand rollers and coagulating pans at first supplied by the Agriculture Department,

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[1] On the Ombi-Tara environment see Appendix B.[B]

[2] On village planting of bush rubber in what was then the Kokoda District see Rimoldi 1966:86-93.

A [See Category 102--Analyst]

B [See Category 133 pp. 49ff.--Analyst]

628 Vohorita), there should be a great many linkages between individuals, and there should be no major dissension, between the villages, for the time being.

I have already mentioned that each village has its own range of "closely allied" settlements: the Sivepe people would always mention Garombi and Binduta, while some families would also mention Sasembata, Kongohambo and Torogota; nobody would ever mention Isoge. But in Garombi and Binduta, Isoge was classified as a "closely allied" village. It was the same in Inonda, which mentioned Ajoro[A] and Musou, while Ajoro mentioned Inonda and Hohota (see Map VIII).[A]

It is not easy to find a single criterion by which a village may be classified as "closely allied." One approach might be to count the number of informants who have close consanguines and/or affines in the village under consideration. On that basis (see Table 9) the ten "closest" villages to Sivepe would be: Sasembata, Garombi, Awala, Hamburata, Korogombata (i.e., Binduta), Hojane, Binduta, Isivita, Togahou and Soroputa. Now these are not anything like the ten villages geographically closest to Sivepe. Togahou and Isivita are both situated outside the Waseta tribal district as defined by Williams. The list does not include Kongohambo which is less than one mile from the present site of Sivepe village.

On the other hand, if frequency of social contacts be a measure, the number of contacts with another village is determined to a large extent by geographical distance. Though only three Sivepe informants had first or second degree consanguines in Kongohambo, and only one Sivepe girl, to my knowledge, was married in Kongohambo, there were more distant links which were assiduously maintained and the closer links led to far more visits than, for instance, the links with Togahou, which was 15 miles away.

628 If we compare the contacts between "closely allied" villages
731 as between 1951 and 1967, the most striking difference is the effect of newly formed organizational units in which certain villages are administratively grouped together. Before the eruption, there was a great deal of contact between persons in these villages, through individual kinship and friendship links, but collective contacts remained confined to feasts, deaths and the settlement of
[582] quarrels. Individual contacts, presumably, were as frequent then as they are now, as it is characteristic of the "closely allied" villages that marriages were regularly contracted between them, so that most people would have some affinal or maternal kin in the allied village.

628 After the eruption, however, several modern organizations of
● 631 a range wider than the village were set up under Australian influence.
731 The building and maintaining of the Sasembata mission station, and the holding of regular Sunday services there, led to regular institutionalized cooperation between the villages. The men built
[794] the school and the hospital together, the children went to school
[797] together, the people worshipped and attended church festivals

A [See Cat. 116, p. End Map 7--Analyst]
B [See Cat. 116, p. 214--Analyst]

together, the church council, with representatives from all the villages, deliberated together. This cooperation was a gradual development occurring over the years under consideration; it will be traced in detail in a later chapter. The setting up of wards under the Higaturu Local Government Council led to further occasions for formal cooperation between villages belonging to the same ward. It was characteristic of both the church and the government council organizations that they divided the Sasembata district into areas with definite boundaries, each area comprising several villages. The church recognized two such divisions, the government council three. I have already emphasized that the idea of such boundaries was a novel one (see Map IX).[A] It is beginning to have two kinds of effect: first, the strengthening of bonds between villages within the same ward or the same section of a mission parish (e.g., bonds between Sivepe and Isoga, which up to now have not been closely allied) and secondly, the loosening of bonds between villages divided by the boundaries which are now being defined (e.g., bonds between Sivepe and Kongohambo, hitherto closely allied, but now separated by administrative procedures).

These generalizations will be documented below; my task at present is to consider contacts between Sivepe and closely allied villages arising out of the eruption and relocation. Here inter-village cooperation was a far less significant factor than inter-village competition, especially for use of the land. One of the deep anxieties of the Orokaiva in the refugee camps and later in resettlement villages such as Irihambo, Awala, Kongohambo was that if the people did not return to their land, some others might decide to occupy it and it might be impossible to dislodge them. This was a very real danger because neither in 1951 nor at present is there in existence a land register from which the ownership of individual or village parcels may be unequivocally established. The Orokaiva plant boundary trees round their blocks of land and there is a taboo on interfering with these. This is not merely a supernatural taboo; interference with a boundary justifies a killing. It is far less clear, however, just what rights a person holds in a particular parcel. As this is a crucial issue in the whole history of Orokaiva resettlement, I should explain this in some detail.

Crocombe and Hogbin provide an excellent example of the ambiguity of Orokaiva land rights. After wars with the Sangara, both the Andiriha and the Tandai'undi clans were driven from their villages and settled down together in a village named Sambogo. Later, some of the Andiriha set up Inonda on land to which the Tandai'undi had superior rights. At present, this land is used by Andiriha, and upon inquiring into the legal basis of tenure I was given the following explanation. Two daughters of the Tandai'undi owner's lineage married into Andiriha and were given the Inonda land to "look after." As is usual among Orokaiva, this right to

A [See Cat. 116, p. End Map 8--Analyst]

628 Although these contacts were confined to relatively few villages, their part in village life was by no means insignificant. Some of these contacts arose out of affinal links and maternal links; others arose out of residual land rights held in these more distant villages. Unless an annual visit is made such rights are [631] apt to be extinguished. Only in one specific case--the marking out of the boundaries of the lower Sasembata local government council ward--was the contact between these villages a direct result of modern administrative exigencies.

628 I have already mentioned that Sivepe shared some land 423 boundaries with Soroputa and Agenahambo; these boundaries lay North of the Sohu River and were fairly indefinite. The blocks North of the river were used by Sivepe people of Soroputa ancestry, men with Soroputa or Agenahambo wives resident in Sivepe, and so on. The blocks were far away from the new Soroputa land Agenahambo [659] villages and therefore not cultivated except by Sivepe people. It was only in 1967 that the local government council decided that the boundaries of wards should be properly laid out and surveyed, as a first step to title improvement within the wards. The people of Sivepe, Agenahambo and Soroputa therefore had to meet together to agree upon the definition of boundaries which hitherto were allowed to shift as expediencies (such as marriages, migrations) arose.

It was rather interesting to compare how this boundaries problem was handled between different villages. The eastern boundary of the lower Sasembata ward was in fact the boundary between Sivepe and Kongohambo. These villages were in very close contact with each other, shared many kinship links, had mourned each other's dead and had feasted each other. When the boundaries had to be defined, the Sivepe men simply walked to Kongohambo with their bush knives, had a brief meeting with the Kongohambo men (half an hour, no more) and proceeded to cut the boundary. The principles by which they established their landmarks are irrelevant here. On the other hand, Soroputa was handled in a gingerly manner. A small delegation was sent, two men who "originally" came from Soroputa, who actually owned the land on the boundary, and who had kept in regular contact with Soroputa. It was felt that Soroputa might refuse if anyone else was sent. This choice of ambassadors was especially interesting as there had been an "election" for an organising committee to determine these boundaries. Though this committee consisted of one man each from Sivepe, Gorombo, Binduta and Isoge, the delegation that sent to Soroputa and Agenahambo was sent by the Sivepe representative and did not include a single representative, elected for this task.

628 This incident provides a good example of the role of the mediator which is crucially important in all inter-village contacts except those where alliance is very close. The two men sent on this delicate mission had no special qualifications except their

177 higher certificate after a two-year course, while various teacher
657 training programmes were involving a number of them. Furthermore,
647 the inspector in charge of the school and, after January, 1967, also
[895] the District Inspector of Schools was a Papuan. Thus, in the Church as well as in the Health and Education Department, Papuans were in actual administrative control over Northern District operations, with white personnel nominally their subordinates. The term "nominally" must be applied to the relative rank of Papuan controllers and expatriate subordinates, because the latter are still receiving a very much higher salary. Nonetheless, the new situation definitely sets up a hierarchy, with Papuans at senior levels, and the village people are in official contact with them.

[631] I shall give two further examples of contacts with Papuan public servants. The first was with a clerk sent out by the Department of Lands, whose task it was to organise the establishment of boundaries between the wards. This man was an Orokaiva, from Jegarata, who explained the purpose of the boundaries in the Orokaiva language, at a meeting held in Garombi and supposedly attended by all the villages in the ward. A spirited discussion took place, the people suggested village representatives, the clerk accepted the representatives proposed for Sivepe and Garombi, but was non-committal over the other two, as he saw Isoge and Binduta were [276] insufficiently represented. He chewed betelnut with the people; the whole procedure was matter-of-fact and businesslike, and no covering-up was attempted for the two ill-represented villages. [191] The absence of an interpreter, the use of Orokaiva instead of the lingua franca (Motu), the free use of betelnut, the fact that we all sat on mats together--all this established an easy bridge between government and people.

242 During the same period, a good deal of agricultural extension
177 work was in progress in the nearby village of Sasembata. Here again, the day-to-day instruction was given by two Northern District Papuans, agricultural assistants, in a rather more junior position to the Lands Department clerk. These two young men were definitely supervised by an expatriate officer; they were staying in Sasembata village for awhile and came over to Sivepe one night for a small feast and a dance. Though they were both Aiga, they mixed easily with their Orokaiva agemates, on a basis of equality and familiarity. They were the guests of a third agricultural assistant, who belonged to Sasembata village but were working for the Department at Saiho. This young man gave me a description of the scope of agricultural development (a rubber cooperative) proceeding in Sasembata. He had a mature and responsible understanding of the project.

657 Finally, Papuan government drivers had highly significant
647 though informal contacts with villagers. These men, highly skilled at negotiating the difficult roads of the Northern District, have
177 the task of driving government personnel where they wish to go and often travel unaccompanied by officers to collect personnel or cargo.